MINUTES

OF THE

FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

NORTH RIVER

UNITED BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

CONVENED WITH

PILGRIM'S REST CHURCH,

FAYETTE COUNTY, ALABAMA,

From 22d to 26th Sept., 1848.

TUSCALOOSA:
PRINTED BY M. D. J. SLADE.
1848.

MINUTES.

Friday, Sept. 22, 1848.

1. The anniversary discourse was delivered, according to previous appointment, by Elder B. B. Smith, from the first Epistle general of John, 3d chapter and 11th verse. Theme of the discourse, Brotherly Love.

2. After a recess of one hour and a half, the Delegates assembled in the Meeting-house ; prayer by the Moderator.

3. Read the Letters from Corresponding Churches, and enrolled the names of the Delegates.

4. An invitation was extended to churches desirous of uniting with this body. The Pine Grove and Fairview churches, newly constituted, presented letters, praying admission, which were received, and the right hand of fellowship extended to their Delegates by the Moderator.

5. Elected Elder David W. Anerews, Moderator, and brother Isaac Shepherd, Clerk.

5. Received correspondence in the following manner, viz : from our sister, the Chickasaw Association, letter, but no minutes, by the hands of Elders Martin Ball and James Morton ; also, from our sister, the Big Bear Creek Association, letter, but no minutes, by the hand of Elder Tilmon Howell.

7. Appointed the following committees :

1st. *On Arrangement:* brethren Baker, Richards, Deason, Crow, and Orear, with the Moderator and Clerk.

2d. *To arrange Preaching :* brethren Savage, Markham, Bowlin, Crow, and Yerby.

3d. *To receive and examine Documents :* Elders Smith, Lindley, and Andrews, and brethren Savage and Yerby.

4th. *On Finance :* Brethren Ray, Farquhar, and Rainwater.

8. Adjourned until to-morrow, 8 o'clnck. Prayer by Elder Phillips.

Saturday, September 23, 1848.

9. Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Elder B. B. Smith.

10. Called the names of the Delegates, and marked absentees.

11. The committee of Arrangement, made their report, which was received, and the committee discharged.

12. Appointed the next annual session of this body to be held with Pleasant Grove Church, Walker county, to commence on Friday before the 4th Sabbath in September, 1849 ; and that Elder David W. Andrews be appointed to preach the anniversary sermon, and Elder James Ray his alternate.

13. Appointed Elder B. B. Smith to preach a Missionary sermon at 11 o'clock on Sabbath of our next Association. and Elder Thomas M. Gabbert his alternate ; also to take up a public collection for the support of our Domestic Mission.

14. Appointed brother Willis Richards to prepare a Circular Letter, (with the liberty of choosing his own subject,) and present the same to the next annual session of this body.

15. Appointed correspondence as follows : To the Chickasaw Association, Elders D. W. Andrews, J. Ray, Lewis Harbin, and brethren M. Orear,

A. Markham, D. C. Morrow, W. Hamner, E. G. Terrel ; and Elder B. B Smith to write. To the Big Bear Creek Association, Elders D. W. Andrews, J. L. Lindley, A. J. Smith, and brother A. Lawrence ; and Elder D. W. Andrews to write. Also agreed to petition the Aberdeen Association for correspondence with their body ; and that Elder B. B. Smith and brother W. Richards be appointed to visit them ; and Elder B. B. Smith to write.

16. Elder B. B. Smith who was appointed at our last session to prepare a Circular Letter, presented the same, which was read and unanimously adopted, and ordered to be affixed to the Minutes of this Association at its present session.

17. The Association proceeded to appoint an Executive committee, composed of brethren J. Savage, Willis Richards, D. G. Kerklin, John Ray, and Griffon Trull, to revise our plan of Missionary operations. The above committee appointed the following agents, viz : A. J. Smith for the 1st and 4th Districts, B. B. Smith for the 2d District, and J. Rushing for the 3d Dis. ; whose duty it shall be to visit all the Churches in their several Districts, and collect all the money they can in hand, and all they can by subscription, for the purpose of keeping in operation our Domestic Mission.

18. The first meeting of the Executive board, will be held at Union church, Fayette county, on Saturday before the first Sabbath in January next ; at which time and place all the board will be expected to attend.

19. Received appointments of District meetings, viz :

First District—The meeting to be held with Liberty Church, to commence on Friday before the 4th Sabbath in August, 1849 ; Elder Lewis Harbin to preach the Introductory sermon, and Elder Thomas M. Gabbert his alternate : also, Elder Abner Files to preach a sermon on the duty of Ministers and Deacons, on Sabbath at 11 o'clohk, and Elder A. J. Smith his alternate.

Third District—The meeting to be held with Pilgrim's Rest church, to commence on Friday before the 2d Sabbath in September, 1849 ; Elder James Ray to preach the Introductory sermon, and Elder Jesse Walden his alternate ; also, Elder D. W. Andrews to preach a sermon on the duty of Ministers and Deacons on Sabbath at 11 o'clock, and Elder B. B. Smith his alternate.

Fourth District—The meeting to be held with Shady Grove church, to commence on Friday before the 4th Sabbath in July, 1849 ; Elder B. B. Smith to preach the Introductory sermon, and Elder Jesse Walden his alternate ; also, Elder D. W. Andrews to preach a sermon on the duty of Ministers and Deacons on Sabbath at 11 o'clock, and Elder James Ray his alternate.

20. The Association advises that a public collection be taken up at each of the above named meetings, for the support of our Domestic Mission.

21. Took up the queries : From Union Church—Is it right to hold a member responsible for his conduct while holding a letter of dismission ? We answer it is. From Liberty Church—Has a Church the internal right to invite members of another denomination to commune with her ? Answer, we think not, in view of the contract entered into by her.

22. Adjourned to 8 o'clock Monday morning. Prayer by Elder Tilmon Howell.

[The stand on Sabbath was occupied by Elders Morton and Ball, who preached to a large and attentive congregation. The word preached was productive of much good.]

Monday morning, Sept. 25, 1848.

23. Met pursuant to adjournment; prayer by the Moderator.

24. The committee on Documents, report as follows:

On examination, we find in a document from the Tuskaloosa Association, notice to this body, that the Columbus Association wishes a committee appointed by this Association, to meet committees from the Columbus, Union and Tuskaloosa Associations, on Saturday before the 2d Sabbath in April, 1849, at Pleasant Grove Church, belonging to the Columbus Association, in Fayette county, to examine into the nature of original difficulties existing between the North River Association and certain Churches belonging to the Tuskaloosa Association.

25. *Resolved*, That we appoint a committee of Elders David W. Andrews, B. B. Smith, Jesse Walden, and brethren Abner Files, Willis Richards, John Yerby and John Baker, to meet the above named committees at the time and place appointed.

26. *Resolved*, That we advise the Churches in our union to receive no members that have not been baptized by regular ordained Baptist ministers of the Gospel.

27. The committee on Finance reported as follows: for printing Minutes, $20 85 cents; for Associational purposes, $10 20.

28. *Resolved*, That the brother Clerk have ten dollars for his services.

29. *Resolved*, That the brother Clerk and Elder Thomas M. Gabbert superintend the printing of the Minutes and distribute them to the Distributing Agents in each District, after retaining 50 copies for correspondence, and that they have as many struck as they can for the money sent.

30. Appointed the following Distributing Agents: 1st District, Thomas M. Gabbert; 2d District, Lewis Harbin; 3d District, Joel Rushing; 4th District, David W. Andrews.

31. *Resolved, unanimously*, That our sincere thanks are due the tenters, brethren and friends of Pilgrim's Rest Church, for the kind and hospitable entertainment, afforded us during our meeting, and the same is hereby tendered.

32. After singing, and prayer by the Moderator, adjourned to the time and place of our next appointment.

DAVID W. ANDREWS, Moderator.

Isaac Shepherd, Clerk.

The next annual session of the Chickasaw Association will be held with the Mount Zion Church, Ittawamba county, Miss.; to commence on Friday before the 3d Sabbath in September, 1849.

The next annual session of the Big Bear Creek Association will be held with the Mud Creek Church, Ittawamba county, Miss.; to commence on Friday before the first Sabbath in September, 1849.

Received of Thomas M. Gabbert $20 *for printing* 700 *of these Minutes.*
October 20*th*, 1848. *M. D. J. SLADE.*

NORTH RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION—DELEGATES—STATISTICS—CONTRIBUTIONS— PASTORS—P. O.

CHURCHES.	COUNTIES ...	Post Offices.	Ordained Ministers.	Licentiates.	C. M.	DELEGATRS.	Baptized ...	Rec. by Let	Secession	Restored...	Dismissed	Excluded.	Deceased	Total	Contribut'n for minutes.	Contrib. for Association
Bethlehem,	Tuscal'sa	Oregonia	A Files, T M Gabbert,		1	Abner Files, Lewis Lee,* Thomas Mabbert,*	2	4	1	.	2	1	...	40	1 00	
Salem,	do	New Lexing'n			3	William Appling,* Willis Richards, John Baker,	...	...	.	.	4	2	...	68	1 00	
Liberty	do	Northport	A J Smith		4	Absalom Deason, John Garner, Allen J Smith,	..	..	.	.	2	1	...	22	1 00	50
Columbia	do					Not represented	...	...	.	.	.	.	...			
Macedonia	do	Northport			4	Alexander Lawrence, Ambrose Dollar, Lewis Shirley,	...	...	.	2	3	1	...	41	50	45
Pine Grove	do	do			2	John Shelby, John Deason, Greenberry Phillips	...	..	.	.	.	.	...	11	75	
Hepsebeth	Fayette	Sheffield			4	J W Roby, Walter Hamner, Samuel Apling,	1	...	.	.	.	.	...	13	50	47
Mount Joy	do	do	L B Harbin		2	Lewis B Harbin, Robert Berry,	...	1	.	.	4	3	...	13	62	38
New Hope	Walker				4	Dennis Davis	...	...	.	.	.	.	...	23		
Pleasant Grove	do	Jasper	B B Smith		2	B B Smith, Reuben Keten, Martin Orear,	15	3	.	.	.	1	...	53	1 00	1 20
Ebenezer	do	York	J A Jones		3	Not represented	..	...	.	.	.	.	...	16		
Shepherd	Fayette	Fayetteville			2	Isaac Shepherd, Griffin Trull, John Savage,	..	1	.	.	1	4	2	135	2 25	82
Union	do	Davis's Creek	J Ray	G Trawick	1	James Ray, James Farquhar, Jacob Black,	9	9	1	.	4	.	...	75	1 00	50
Mt. Pleasant	do	Fayetteville	J Winter		3	James T Collins, Allen Wallis, J Shaw,	..	...	.	.	.	.	...	23	50	50
Pilgrim's Rest	do	do		J Rushing	4	Hogen Yerby, Lewis Crow, Daniel G Kerklin	7	3	.	.	10	2	1	63	1 00	1 20
Camp Spring	do	do	R Walden		1	Morris Gwin, Levingston Bobo, Miles Ramwaters	..	...	.	.	.	.	...	28	1 00	1 00
Pleasant Hill	do	Millport			2	Jonathan McNeal, Francis Winter, James Wilson	...	...	.	1	.	2	..	31	85	
New Prospect	Miss	Athens	D Andrews, J Walden		2	David W Andrews, Jesse Walden,* Hutson Butler	1	12	.	.	.	.	...	36	1 30	1 50
Bethel	Monroe	Quincy			3	John H Ray, Isaac Black,	..	...	.	.	.	.	...	29	62	98
Shady Grove,	Marion	Toll Gate			4	John Risinger, David C Morrow, Edmond G Terrell	...	...	.	.	4	.	..	16	50	50
Zion	do	Pikeville			4	Anderson Markham, Robert Bowlin, R Adkins	4	...	.	1	3	13	..	68	1 00	50
Antioch	do	Moscow	J Lindley		1	Jacob Lindley, E Chaffin, W Gossey	5	6	2	.	2	.	...	20	50	50
Fairview,	Tuscaloosa	Oregonia			2	E S Marquis, George Barker, William Holland*	...	...	.	.	.	.	..	12	60	
						Total Number,	44	39	4	4	39	30	3	836	17 49	$11

DEAR BRETHREN : **CIRCULAR.**

I have concluded to give you in short, my views on Church Discipline. Is there not a fault among us on that subject ? if so, should we not try to correct each other as far as the interests of the churches are concerned, that we may be prepared understandingly and profitably to keep house for God.

But what do we understand by discipline ? The term when applied to a Church means order. Then to descipline a church, means to correct its errors, reform or better its condition, instruct and improve its practice, to regulate or reduce to some particular rule or practice of government, and not only to put in order, but to keep in order, the things that belong to the house of God. In order to do this, we are commanded to watch over one another in love; mark, in love, not to watch with an evil eye, hunting out and magnifying every little error of our brother, and speaking of it in his absence; no, but do we see a brother likely to be ensnared, let us caution him in love, pointing out his danger; does a brother absent himself from his conference meetings, let the Church send a committee after him to converse with him, to persuade him to come and associate with his brethren. Brethren, are we not as Churches, at least some of us, in fault in this matter ? do we not suffer our members to wander off and absent themselves for months from their conference, without hunting after them? and do we not sometimes give them up in our affections when they have strayed, and make no effort to reclaim them ? and yet their names remain on the Church book. Should we not hunt after them, and if they will not come to the Church, and take some interest there, after due labor on the part of the Church, let them be cut off, as the Church cannot benefit them nor be benefitted by them.

Reason, as well as the word of God, teaches us that one of the great objects of the organization of the Churches of God here on earth, is the mutual benefit of its members. But how can a member who from time to time absents himself from his conference meetings be beneficial to, or benefitted by the Church. True we may regularly fill our seats at the house of God on Sabbath, but does this clear us as Baptists ? We have our regular appointments for conference meetings, and do we not, when becoming members of the Church, bind ourselves strictly to attend to the rules of the Church we unite ourselves to ? if we then absent ourselves from our conference meetings, we violate a solemn pledge that we have made, and of course lay ourselves liable to be reproved by the Church ; for if one is at liberty to neglect his conference, so is another, and according to this principle all may be absent; then where are our conferences? they must be given up of course for they cannot be held without members to hold them. But one will say, there will be enough to hold them without me, so I may be excused. Suppose all were to come to this conclusion (which they have a right to do if any has,) you see what the result would be; the preacher, (if there be one) would have no person to preach to, and the Church would have no business attended to, and of course be without law, and must soon come to naught. We thus see the propriety of every member who can, regularly attending their conferences that they may mutually advise with each other on the best means to promote the interests of the Church. How often do we find those who absent themselve from their conference, finding fault with what is done by the few who do attend. Now should not all attend so that all the wisdom and talent of the Church may be used in the transactions of her business. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some

is. Are we not all members of the same body? Is not then every member useful in his place, and should he not be at it? Merely for us to attend church on the Sabbath is by no means fulfiling our duty as christians, and particularly as Baptists; sinners do the same; many of them more regular than the members of the church are.

We would now call your attention to what we believe to be the proper manner of exercising Discipline; for there is a right and a wrong way of doing. 1. In case of private offences—In the 18th chap. Mat. we are particularly instructed by our Lord how we should act—if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, &c. But we conceive there is quite a difference between private and public offences. The first is against an individual member; the latter is against the whole church. We think then that the manner of procedure should be different. Where a member is guilty of any public or scandalous sin, he is not only a proper subject for the exercise of Discipline; but any member having knowledge of the same should feel bound to report him or her to the church; then let the church appoint a committee to labor with or visit the offender, and endeavor to reclaim him; and if this cannot be done let her exclude him; but mark, every effort should be used, that is practicable, either in private or public offences, to save the member, and cutting off from the church should be the last resort; for we believe, according to the figure used by the apostle Paul, that as long as the honor of the church can be sustained in retaining a member, he should be retained. He says, shall the eye, because I am not the foot, say, that I am not of the body, or words to this amount; and he then speaks of the different members of the body. Now what do we learn from his reasoning: do we not, that while we should be strict in watching over each other, as churches we should not act hastily in excluding a member; but let us look at the figure—suppose the least member of our body become diseased, how do we act? do we give it up or cut it off hastily? No, indeed, but we use every means to save it, though all the body suffer; and are willing thus to suffer as long as there is a prospect of saving the diseased member; but when we have used every means to save it and fail, that other members become diseased, and mortification likely to ensue, we have it cut off, whether a hand or a foot, as it is better to loose one member than all the members of the body--so of the church. Bestow due labor with a fallen brother; bear with him for a season; but if we find his case past recovery, and retaining him will be a serious injury to the church, let him be cut off: better one suffer than many. Are we asked what should be done with a member, who, after he has sinned publicly and scandalously, comes to the church with acknowledgments? is she, under all circumstances, bound to forgive him, or is she not? We think it the duty of the church to exercise her judgment in such case, and where a brother acknowledges, and the honor of the church can be sustained in forgiving and retaining him, it should be done; but there are gross and scandalous sins for which one cannot be retained, and preserve the honor of the church, even with acknowledgment. To carry out Discipline we must attend strictly to the spirit by which we are influenced to act, for we are liable to two extremes: 1st, by our personal feelings, as by the spirit of man, in which case we are liable to be deficient in Christian charity; and consequently think the individual ought to be excluded, when the honor of the cause does not demand it. 2d, we are liable to be led away by sympathy, and acting from impulse, to forgive and retain a member, when the honor of the cause requires him to be cut off, at least for a season. Now here, once for all, we say, the honor of the cause of God, as well as the interest of the individual should always be had in view, and our object should not be to please ourselves or man, but to please God.

Dear Brethren, we have now perhaps extended our Letter far enough. We have hinted at some few things, and would now call your attention again to the meaning of the term Discipline. It means to put in order—to keep in order. This we must do by keeping in view the items as above specified; having always in view, in attending to Discipline, the honor of the Church and the glory of God. And may the Great Head of the Church watch over us, and keep us as the apple of his eye; giving us at all times wisdom as well as Grace, to act to the honor of his name. May we live in peace, love and confidence; and at last be saved in his everlasting kingdom, is my prayer. Amen.

B. B. SMITH.